

A
Friendly Letter
TO LITTLE
CHILDREN.

By a Lover of CHILDREN.

The Second Edition,



L O N D O N :

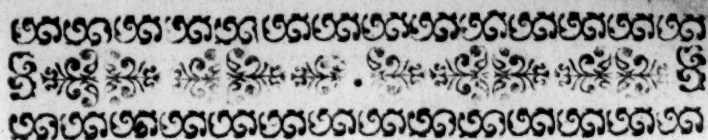
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T O

P A R E N T S.

Fellow Christians,

IF there be any Aptitude in this little Piece to be serviceable to the Souls of your dear Little Ones, next to the Blessing of God, it's Success in a great Measure depends upon your Assistance, in furthering the Design of a sincere Friend of your Children; to whom nothing can yield a greater Pleasure; than to be an Instrument of Saving-good to Young Ones. My Friends! give into this Design: Your Success, will be your rejoicing in old Age, and minister unimaginable Support in sight of the awful World. In this blessed Work, may the God of Heaven, direct, assist, and succeed you. *Amen.*

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A
FRIENDLY LETTER.
TO
CHILDREN.

Dear Young Ones,



H O' I am a Stranger to you,
my Heart's Desire and Prayer
to God for you all is, that
you may be happy in the
Kingdom of Heaven for ever,
I dare say, as young as you
are, you know already that
God Almighty was your Maker ; He formed
that Body of yours He gave you all its Com-
eliness and Beauty : But he has put into it a living
Soul, without which, as beautiful as it is, it
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would be a dead and loathsome Carcass. It will not be long before this Body of yours must be put into a Grave, and there be turn'd into Rottenness and Corruption, and become Meat for Worms ; For you must die : and tho' but a Child, you may die soon, Don't you see daily, many of your Age, who were, it may be, your Play-fellows, or your School-fellows, pretty Creatures ! are dead, and laid in a Grave ? This may be your Case, to die while you are a Child. But tho' the Body die, and be turned to Dust, yet your Soul, *that* will never die, but must live in Heaven or hell for EVER : either live with God and Jesus Christ in Heaven, or be thrown down to Hell, to dwell with Devils in everlasting Flames.

Now, have you ever been told of this ? Or have you ever seriously thought of it ?

ALMIGHTY God, as he is your Maker, he must be your Owner. He has given you a Law, to direct you what you must be and do, that you may please him ; and that is your Bible ; And I dare appeal to you, tho' you have but the Understanding of a Child, whether you do not think it a most reasonable Thing, that a Creature should please the God that made it ? Especially, when I can tell you, that the pleasing God Almighty, is the sure Way, and the only Way to be happy in Heaven for ever. Did you ever think with yourself, wherefore did Almighty God make me ? If you never did, do it now. Sit down and ask yourself wherefore did God make me a reasonable understanding Creature ? Employ your Thoughts a little upon this
serious

serious Matter. You can think upon your Sports, and your Babies, try to think on this; see what Answer the Reason you have will give to this Question, Wherefore did a wise and good God make me? You cannot imagine it was only to eat, and drink, and play; and when tired with that, lie down to sleep; for you see the Dogs, and Swine, and other brute Creatures can do this as well as you. Your Maker has given you Reason, and Understanding, and Speech, and therein has made you wiser than the Beasts of the Field. Now, as God Almighty has done more for you than he has done for them, so he expects you should do more than they, The Work he has given you to do is what suits your Natures, as you are reasonable Creatures, and it will be for your happiness speedily to set about it: But if you neglect it, you run the Hazard of being miserable for ever. I will therefore tell you, in a few Words, wherefore God made you. It may be you have been told it many a Time, and are able to repeat the words, as a Parrot does; but I would assist you to understand the Meaning of it, when I tell you wherefore God Almighty made you. It is this,

HE made you, that you might love, and fear, and serve Him, as the only Way to be happy in Heaven for ever.

I SAY, it is to love God; that takes in the whole of your Duty, For if you love him, you will fear to offend him, and you will endeavour to serve him. It is not every one who says they love God, do love him. And for your Encouragement know, if you love God, he will love you

you ; he will take you under his Care while you live, and make you happy in Heaven when you die.

Tho' you are but a Child, you are capable of loving and serving of God. There have been Children of five or six Years old who have been remarkable for their Love of God ; and of this Number you may be if you will endeavour it. I again appeal to your own Reason, whether it be not the most fitting Thing in the World, that you should love God, who is continually doing you good ? For, whether you have thought of it or no, it is Almighty God gives you every good Thing. What a miserable Creature would you be, if God were not good to you ? That you have your Health ; that you are not a Cripple ; that you have your Senses, are not blind or deaf ; that you have your understanding, are not Fools and Ideots. Did you ever thank God that he made you a reasonable Creature ? Was it ever in your Mind ? Is it not a Mercy that you have Memory, and the noble Faculty of Speech ? This is all from God's Goodness to you And it is he continues all this to you.

SIT down and think with yourself, if it be thus, that I depend on this good God for all, how careful then should I be that I please him ? How afraid should I be of offending him ? If I do offend him, he can soon take away all my Mercies from me. And, as young as I am, I deserve he should do so. I find it true, as my Bible tells me, God is good, and he does good ; for he has done me good all my Days : But I must remember, he observes me, and will call
me

me to an Account, what I have done with all the Mercies he has given me. I have had my Health, and the Use of my Limbs, the Exercise of my Reason continued to me ; but have I loved God, and praised God for them, Tho' I am but a Child, Almighty God observes me : Shall I spend my time only in childish Play, and Sports, forgetful of my Maker, who has been thus good to me ? How miserable shall I be for ever, if I continue to do so ! Well,

ARE you sensible you depend on God for all that's good ? Then should not your Eye be directed to him in humble Prayer ? It is he must give you the Mercies of every Day, to make it a comfortable Day. Jesus Christ has taught you to pray to your Father in Heaven, for your daily Bread ; and he must give it you, or you will want it, notwithstanding all your Parents Care and Tenderneſs of you. So that I think it is plain to your Understanding. tho' but a Child of five or fix Years old, that Almighty God is to be chiefly regarded by you, as the Giver of every good Thing.

I SHOULD rejoice, could I convince one Child of its Dependance on God, its Maker and Preserver.

WHO but this God gave you your Birth of Parents, who from Love and Tenderneſs provide for you. It is he inclines them to be good unto you, and enables them to feed you, and clothe you, or else they would not do it, or could not do it ; as is the Caſe of Multitudes of poor Creatures. You might have been born
of

of such Parents, as through Poverty, or Wickedness, might have cast you forth into the wide World to shift for yourself; as 'tis with many forlorn and miserable Wretches, whom you see every Day strolling about the Streets, having not Bread to eat, or Clothes to cover them.

Now, at such a Sight can you forbear lifting up your Eye and Heart to God in Thankfulness, that has made such a Difference between you and them? How can you forbear it, upon the Sight of any of these miserable starving Creatures? Methinks you should, in the most serious Manner, say, O! my heavenly Father, how good art thou to me! Oh! that I may love and serve thee all my Days!

EXERCISE your Thoughts a little upon your Dependance on God: And must you not say to yourselves, I find God Almighty is more to me than all the World; if through childish Folly I should live regardless of him, what a wicked Creature shall I be? how can I displease him more, than to sin against him, who has done me good all my Life long? How angry will he be with me? And if God be angry with me, what shall I do? He is continually good to me, and shall I dare to live forgetful of him?

TRY to employ your Thoughts a little in this Manner. You are capable of it, as well as thinking of your Play and Sports. Endeavour to get your Minds impressed with this, so as it may frequently return in your Thoughts, *I depend on Almighty God for All.*

If you are indeed convinced of this, must not the next Thought be, what shall I do that I may answer the Design of this good God? I have been told, that God is thus good to me, that I might glorify him while I live, in this World, and be happy with him for ever in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now, my dear Child, is it not of the greatest Concern to you, to know what it is to glorify God? For all your Happiness, both now and for ever, depends upon it. If you do not glorify God now, you will be miserable when you die, Be willing to be instructed how you may glorify God; For if you do, you will be a happy young Creature; for hereby you will become one of God's Children.

I WOULD try to help you to understand what it is to glorify God, You must not think that your glorifying God, will make him more glorious than he is already. No, this all the Creatures both in Heaven and Earth cannot do. But you glorify God when you love him above all, as the most amiable and good Being; for he is goodness itself. There is none good as God is.

ARE your Parents good to you, 'tis because God is good to you. Now. is it not a fitting Thing, we should love them who love us? If a Neighbour, or a Friend, shews Kindness to you, and give you good Things, do not you love them? How much more should a kind and good God be loved by you? I know if the Question
were

were asked you, if you loved God Almighty, you would be ashamed to say you did not; for you cannot but think that is a very wicked Child that does not love God: But remember it is not saying you love him is loving him.

YOUR Bible tells you of some who are Haters of God, tho' with their Lips they shew'd much Love. Therefore, if your Love to God be sincere, it will shew itself in the same Manner, as you do your Love to your Parents, or to a kind Friend. Do you not obey your Parents? Don't you love their Company? And love to please them? Are you not afraid of displeasing them? when in any fear of Harm, don't you run to them for Help? Every good Child that loves its Parents does so. Is it not grieving to you, when you give them Occasion to frown upon you, or be angry with you?

Now, will it not be thus with you if indeed you love God? For he is your Father in Heaven, and your best Friend. How frequent will you be in reading your Bible, that heavenly Book? For therein God Almighty has told you what you must be, and do, that you may please him,

IF you love him, you will endeavour to please him. You will read that holy Book with this Design, that you may learn to please that God whom you say you love.

IF you love God, you will fear to offend him; you will dread his Anger more than any evil in the World. You will fear to offend him by
lying;

lying ; for lying Lips are an Abomination to God, but they who speak Truth are his Delight. A lying Child is a wicked Child. All Liars are the Children of the Devil. and will be cast into Hell-fire. Fear to offend God by taking his Name in vain. If you love God, you will never mention his holy Name but with Reverence. They are wicked Children, who on every trifling Occasion cry out, O Lord, or O God.

THIS he has himself told us in the third Commandment, he will not bear, but will shew his Displeasure against such wicked Children. Do not play with such young ones ; if you at any time hear such Words from any, reprove them ; ask them how they dare in such a manner to provoke Almighty God ? He can stop their Breath in a Moment, and what will become of them should they die, while they are taking God's Name in vain ? Again,

IF you love God, you will worship him, you will pray to him. It may be, you may think, it can signify nothing for a silly Child to pray to God ; will the God of Heaven hear the Prayers of a young Child ? Yes, he will, for the sake of Jesus Christ he will hear thy Prayers, tho' thou prayest but like a Child, if it be in the best Manner thou canst, and with thy whole Heart.

FOR a Child to fall on its Knees, in a private Corner, where no Eye sees it, but the Eye of God, to implore his Mercy, and beg his Blessing, and praise him for his Goodness, this will be highly pleasing to God ; For it shows
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your Love to him, and will be a Proof that he loves you, by inclining you to pray to him.

AND what a happy Child wilt thou then be? What Blessedness is contain'd in being a beloved Child of the God of Heaven? Methinks every Child should send up this hearty Wish, Oh! that I may be loved of God Almighty.

IF you love God, you will gladly attend upon his Worship in publick. You will rejoice when the Lord's-Day comes, wherein you may shew your Love to God, by publickly declaring to the World, your Dependance on this great and good God for all, both for this World and another.

You will join in his Praises, you will with Reverence and Attention hear his Word from his Ministers; remembring God sends them with a Message from Heaven to you, as well as to older Persons, to assist you in your way to Heaven.

FOR your Encouragement know, a gracious God will accept of Worship at your Hands, if you do your best; Tho' you pray but as a Child, and praise him but as a Child, if it be the Language of thy Heart, he will accept thee through the Lord Jesus, our powerful Advocate in Heaven.

You cannot but observe how wicked those Children are, who profane the Lord's-Day, by walking Abroad for Pleasure, or by Idleness and Sloth, when they should be at Church worshipping

ping God. How many have lamented it as the Cause of their great Wickedness, when they have come to die at the Gallows; This should terrify every young one at the Thoughts of profaning the Lord's Day.

OH! to see a Child devoutly worshipping God in publick, and upon its Knees in private, how delightful a Sight is it! Should a wicked Person see you thus behave toward Almighty God, could he forbear acknowledging, surely this great God deserves to be loved, and feared, and served by me, as much as by this little one, this Child of eight or ten Years of Age.

OH! what a wretch have I been, who all my Days have never paid any Regard to God, my Maker, and Benefactor? How am I shamed, and reproached by this pious Child?

SINCE you are convinced you depend on God for all, never sit down to your Food without directing your Eye to him for his Blessing upon your Food; and when you rise up, offer him your Praise, for making such good Provision for you.

To see Children sit down to their Meals, without looking up to God for his Blessing, is to behave like a Brute. Some have been choaked by their Food, and have died at the Table. What need then have you to direct your Eye to God, as him, from whom you receive your daily Bread, and by whose Blessing alone your Food can nourish you.

By thus behaving, you glorify God. That is, hereby he appears glorious in the View of those about you : As a God who deserves the Love, and Fear, and Service of all his reasonable Creatures. O ! who would not fear, who would not love and serve a God so great and so good !

I would hope, I have no Occasion to tell you, that Obedience to your Parents is what your Maker has commanded, as ever you would be pleasing to him, and secure his Favour. Without this, do what you will besides, you will never be accepted of him. And if God do not accept you, you are undone for ever.

AN undutiful Child is a monstrous Sight ; and if it die in that State, the God who made them will have no Mercy upon them. And when you obey your Parents, from a Regard to God, who has commanded it, you glorify God.

YOUR Parents in your Infancy did dedicate you to God by holy Baptism. Did you ever think with yourself what the Meaning of your Baptism was ? What your Parents designed by it ? And what by that you were obliged to ? I hope you don't imagine it was a mere Ceremony, which when once over, deserved no further Regard from you.

Ask your Parents what they did for you when the Minister baptized you ? They will tell you, if they understood what they did, that they then enter'd you into God's Family ; that they then
devoted

devoted you to him as a Child of his ; imploring his Mercy for you, and his Care of you and that he would be a Father to you ; engaging they would do their best to instruct you in the Knowledge of his Will, that you might do it, and so be a happy Child. This is what they have done,

BUT now you are come to some Understanding, there is something to be done by you ; you should now think with yourselves, what must I do, that my Baptism may be a real Benefit to me ? That I may share in the Blessings it includes ? Let me desire thee to fall on thy Knees, and beg of thy heavenly Father, that he would instruct thee, how thou may'st make good that early Dedication:

SAY, Lord ! my Parents gave me up unto thee in my Infancy, as a Child of thine, O ! help me now to give up myself unto thee ; Enable me to say sincerely, Lord ! by thy Grace I will be thine, thine alone, and for ever. I do now from my Heart consent to the Choice my Parents made of thee for my God—Remembering all along, as thou art a sinful Creature, thou must have thy Eye directed to Jesus Christ, who is thy alone Peace-maker ; and for whose sake only it is thou canst hope for Acceptance with a holy God, upon thy dedicating thyself unto him. Thy Prayers how earnest soever, will not be heard but for his sake.

To enforce this, know, if you do not make good your Baptism, by devoting yourself to God, through the Meditation of Jesus Christ, you will

not only lose the Benefit of your Baptism, but you will be exposed to the greater Misery; for you will be dealt with in the severest Manner, as one that has dealt falsely with God. Don't therefore think, that Baptism alone will save you: No, you must make good the Engagement. You have mighty Encouragement thus to do. When Jesus Christ was upon Earth, what Tenderness and Compassion did he express to little Children? Some were brought to him, and he took them in his Arms, and blessed them. O how great a Thing is it to be blessed of Jesus Christ! Don't you wish you had been one of those little Children? Why, you may be one of those Children whom Jesus Christ will bless, if you are but willing. Though he be now in Heaven, yet has he the same Bowels of Compassion for Children, as when he was upon Earth, therefore if you are in earnest, in your Desires of it, he will bless you too. And, O what a happy young Creature wilt thou then be! It will be more, and better, than if thou wast Heir to the greatest Estate; nay, more than if thou didst possess the whole World. Methinks, some little Creature hearing or reading this, should immediately run into some private Place, in the best Manner it can, and beg that Jesus Christ would bless it: And be assur'd if thou prayest in the best Manner thou canst, he will hear thy Prayer, and will bless thee. Nay, though thou shouldst be unable to express thy desire, he knows thy Meaning; he understands the Language of thy Heart.

Dear little Ones.

I KNOW you all of you aim at being happy. But do you know what it is to be happy? It is not to follow your Play, and your Sports; it is
not

not to do what you list. I do believe some Children do think This is to be happy. Alas! 'tis no such Thing; no, so far is this from Happiness, that it is the Way to be miserable. Shall I tell you of a sure Way, and the only Way to be happy? Be careful to remember it: 'Tis this, If you will be a *happy* Child, you must be a *good* Child.

HAD you all the Riches in the World, were you the beautifullest Creature on God's Earth, were you loved and admired by every one; alas! this alone will not make you happy. You must be *good*, that is, you must love, and fear, and serve the God of Heaven.

UNLESS you are of the Number of his faithful Servants, you will be for ever shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven: And, indeed, could you be admitted there, you could not be happy there; for none can be happy there, but the Lovers of God, and of Jesus. Therefore, let this be your principal Care, that you be a *good* Child, and then you will be a *happy* Child.

Now, if any young ones should, by what has been said, become solicitous that it may be a Lover of God and of Jesus, in order to its being happy for ever; I have abundance to say to you, for your Encouragement. With what Delight will a merciful God look upon such a young Creature! How ready is the compassionate Saviour to receive it into the Arms of his Mercy! What a Blessing will such a one be to the World, should it be spared to advanced Years? It will
be

be a Blessing to the Family to which it belongs, and to all about it.

How will it rejoice the Hearts of your pious Parents, to find their Prayers for you, and their Instructions given you, have not been in vain? And you will be loved of all who are wise and good. How thankful will aged Christians be, that any young ones are rising up to support the Religion of Jesus in the World? That the Saviour of Sinners is like to have a Seed to serve him, when they are lodged in the Dust.

HEREBY will you best provided for the Safety and Comfort of present Life. Your Parents may die, and leave you Fatherless and Motherless; you may fall into ill Hands, who may defraud you; or what is worse, may corrupt you by wicked Example, or evil Council; but by loving and fearing God betimes, you put yourselves into his Hands, under his Care and keeping; and then how safe are you! For he will be your Father and your Friend, and there is no Friend like him.

YOUR Parents may leave you poor, but if you are one of God's Children, he will take you under his Care, and will provide for you. Does he feed the Fowls of the Air? and the Beasts of the Desert? and do you think he will not provide for his own Children? You may be easy, for he will care for you. He will be a God unto you.

AND who can tell what Happiness that contains! What can you want, tho' you should be friendless

LITTLE CHILDREN . 21

friendless on Earth, when you have such a Friend in Heaven ? There can be no *good* Thing wanting to them who love and fear God.

To be a Child of God, is to be an Heir of Heaven, and can you desire greater Blessedness ? To be cared for by an all-sufficient God while you live, and Heaven when you die, what would you ? What can you have more ? And this is the happy State of every good and pious Child.

Dear young Ones,

I HAVE in this Letter to you testified my Concern for your everlasting Happiness. And if I, who am a Stranger to you, am solicitous for you, surely you ought to be solicitous for yourselves. It is my hearty Prayer to the God of Heaven, that he would accompany this little Book, with his Blessing ; that some pretty young Creature's, by reading these Lines may have its Heart directed toward God and Heaven, and may become truly thoughtful about their Souls, and the everlasting World. God will have the Glory, yours will be the Happiness and Comfort, and it will contribute not a little to the Pleasure of one, who is

A sincere Lover of CHILDREN.

*A PRAYER for a CHILD.*

Almighty and most merciful Father ! I a poor Creature, the Work of thy Hands, do throw myself at thy Feet, acknowledging I deserve to be banished thy Presence for ever. But I come to thee in the Name of thy dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ ; oh ! for his sake have mercy upon me a Sinner. Deal not with me, O Lord, as I deserve ; for tho' a Sinner, I desire to be a Penitent. It grieves me to think how much I have forgotten thee, tho' I live continually upon thy Bounty. But forgive unto me my many Transgressions. This thou hast promised to every Penitent, of which Number I hope I am. Oh ! by thy sanctifying Spirit hear this distemper'd Soul of mine ; Plant in it a strong Bias toward thyself as my Portion. Grant me, O my heavenly Father, a heart to love, and fear, and serve thee ; and for this world, do with me as thou pleasest. Oh ! preserve me from the Sins and Follies of my childish State. I beg I may hate and abhor Lying, as a Mark of the Devil's Children. Help me I may never take thy Name in vain : Ever remembering thou hearest all I say, and seest all I do. Grant I may live in Obedience to thy holy Laws ; and do thou assist me in the reading thy holy Word, that I may know, and endeavour, to walk so as to please thee my heavenly Father. Instruct me, O Lord, in my Duty to my Parents, and to my Neighbour, and may I do it. May I thankfully receive the Instructions of my Parents.

Parents, and follow their good Example. May I truly love them who so dearly love me, and then shall I do my Duty to them with Pleasure. Oh! that I may always behave as a Child of thine, as one devoted to thee; and that can truly say, Thou art my Portion, O Lord: Engaging I will be thy Help, be thy faithful Servant all my Days; and a sincere Disciple of thy holy Jesus, to whom I am indebted, for all the Hopes I have of thy Favour and everlasting Life. Grant me, O my merciful Father, I may never wickedly depart from thee; but may, by thy Grace, be preserved from the Snares of a tempting World, and the sinful inclinations of my own Heart, unto thy heavenly Kingdom. Lord! hear my prayer, tho' I am but a Child, and let my Cry come unto thee, who hearest Prayer; I ask it all for Jesus sake, who is my only Mediator, to whom be everlasting Praises, Amen.

F I N I S.



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